



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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**Wireless Telecommunications Bureau
And Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Seek Comment on Accessible Mobile Phone Options for
People who are Blind, Deaf-blind, or Have Low Vision**

CG Docket No. 10-145

Comment Date: September 13, 2010

Reply Comment Date: September 30, 2010

On May 13, 2010, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau held a workshop on “Expanding Disability Access with Wireless Technologies” (Wireless Access Workshop) to learn more about mobile communications issues facing people with disabilities and the ways in which new technologies can offer opportunities to meet the communications access needs of this community. Participants included stakeholders from the disability community, industry, academia, and non-profit organizations. On June 15, 2010, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau met with twelve members of the deaf-blind community, along with representatives of the Helen Keller National Center and the American Association of the Deaf-Blind.¹ The purpose of this meeting was to discuss telecommunications and Internet barriers experienced by this population.

Based on the input that Commission staff received during these events, along with the record developed in conjunction with the National Broadband Plan,² we are concerned that people who are blind or have other vision disabilities have few accessible and affordable wireless phone options.³ More specifically, according to statements made at the workshop, the vast majority of mobile telephones are not accessible to this population without the addition of expensive software. We are also concerned that many wireless technologies may not be compatible with Braille displays needed by individuals who are deaf-blind. In addition, according to the participants of the June 15th meeting, many specialized technologies needed to enable wireless telecommunications access for the deaf-blind community are cost prohibitive and difficult to find.

¹ Meeting summary available at <http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7020511584>.

² See, e.g., American Association of the Deaf-Blind Comments in re: NBP PN#4 (*Comment Sought on Broadband Accessibility for People with Disabilities Workshop II: Barriers, Opportunities, and Policy Recommendations – NBP Public Notice #4*, GN Docket Nos. 09-47, 09-51, 09-137, Public Notice 24 FCC Rcd 11968 (CGB 2009), filed Oct. 6, 2009, at 1-2.

³ See e.g., Comments of Paul Schroeder, American Foundation for the Blind, “Expanding Disability Access with Wireless Technologies,” (May 13, 2010), (Wireless Access Workshop), <http://reboot.fcc.gov/video-archives>.

In order to be fully informed on the issues raised by consumers and determine appropriate next steps to achieve telecommunications access for these populations, we seek input from all stakeholders on the following:

- (1) The wireless phone features and functions in the current marketplace that are not accessible for people who are blind, have vision loss, or are deaf-blind and the extent to which gaps in accessibility are preventing wireless communication access by these populations;
- (2) The cost and feasibility of technical solutions to achieve wireless accessibility for these populations;
- (3) Reasons why there are not a greater number of wireless phones – particularly among less expensive or moderately-priced handset models – that are accessible to people who are blind or have vision loss;
- (4) Technical obstacles, if any, to making wireless technologies compatible with Braille displays, as well as the cost and feasibility of technical solutions to achieve other forms of compatibility with wireless products and services for people who are deaf-blind;
- (5) Recommendations on the most effective and efficient technical and policy solutions for addressing the needs of consumers with vision disabilities, including those who are deaf-blind.
- (6) Recommendations on actions that our bureaus or the Commission should take to address the current lack of access. For example, is additional guidance needed on specific access features that should be included in wireless products? Should we facilitate a dialogue among stakeholders in order to reach a specific agreement to address the accessibility concerns outlined above?

Pursuant to sections 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission's rules, interested parties may file comments in **CG Docket No. 10-145**⁴ on or before **September 13, 2010** and reply comments on or before **September 30, 2010**. Comments may be filed using: (1) the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS), (2) the Federal Government's eRulemaking Portal, or (3) by filing paper copies. *See Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings*, 63 FR 24121 (1998).

- **Electronic Filers:** Comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>. Filers should follow the instructions provided on the website for submitting comments.
- **Paper Filers:** Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, filers must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number.
- Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail (although we continue to experience delays in receiving U.S. Postal Service mail). All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

⁴ This Public Notice is being released under a new docket number, CG Docket No. 10-145, which shall be captioned "Accessible Mobile Phone Options for People who are Blind, Deaf-blind, or Have Low Vision," and include all related matters. This new docket number is established to further administrative efficiency.

- The Commission's contractor will receive hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary at 236 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Suite 110, Washington, DC 20002. The filing hours at this location are 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes must be disposed of before entering the building.
- Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743.
- U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail must be addressed to 445 12th Street, SW, Washington DC 20554.

A copy of this document and any subsequently filed documents in this matter will be available during regular business hours at the FCC Reference Center, Portals II, 445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-A257, Washington, DC 20554, (202) 418-0270. This document and any subsequently filed documents in this matter may also be purchased from the Commission's duplicating contractor at their website, www.bcpiweb.com, or by calling 1-800-378-3160. A copy of the submission may also be found by searching on the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs>.

To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice), (202) 418-0432 (TTY).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Elizabeth Lyle, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, (202) 418-1776; TTY (202) 418-1169 or email at Elizabeth.Lyle@fcc.gov.

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